

October 2023

Port City Ram

A publication of the National Civil War Naval Museum at Port Columbus, Inc

Mystery at the Museum

WHAT: An Interactive Theatre Extravaganza

WHEN: October 19, 20, & 21
October 27 & 28
7:00 PM nightly

COST: \$50 per person
PortColumbus.org
or call 706-327-9798

WHERE: 1002 Victory Drive

~ Just Desserts

This year's theatre production is called **"Murder at the Comic-Con."** Written by Kate and JJ Musgrove, this show finds superheroes and villains uniting to solve a mystery! Attendees are transported to the first ever Real Comic-Con, the convention for real super people only! All of your super friends will be there to enjoy a night of power networking and swapping super stories until the group realizes that their powers are somewhat reduced. Is there something in the water or something more sinister going on? The National Civil War Naval Museum has a table ready for you so come join this hilarious spoof of comic book characters and comic conventions. **Costumes of any type are welcome and encouraged!**

This event is a fundraiser designed to support the mission of the National Civil War Naval Museum, deepen the museum's impact, and help ensure the financial sustainability of this valuable cultural institution. The museum cares for a unique collection of nationally relevant maritime artifacts as well as a strong archival research collection. It offers an array of educational programs for students of all ages, in addition to a variety of entertaining public events and programs for the community. **This FUNdraisers will offer a CASH BAR.**

Check out page 4 to see the signature "KimmyCake" dessert you'll have each night!

Calling all amateur sleuths and dessert lovers! This October, look forward to cooler weather, pumpkin spice, and a very special fundraiser from your favorite museum! For the third year in a row, the National Civil War Naval Museum proudly presents its annual FUNdraiser, **"Mystery at the Museum: Just Desserts!"** That's right, this interactive murder mystery show features **ONLY DESSERTS** this year, so you can satisfy your sweet tooth while solving a little "crime."

Each show features four side-splitting acts, a slice of a signature "KimmyCakes" dessert, and a buffet of other sweet treats. You can also get in on the show by playing a part or becoming a top detective. In this immersive experience, the culprit is hiding in plain sight! Grab some friends and come satisfy your cravings with this sweet after-dinner production!

Port Columbus Civil War Naval Center, Inc.

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From the Executive Director



When we put the last newsletter together in early July, it was 100+ degrees outside. Now it is absolutely gorgeous outside! If only it could stay like this . . .

In July we lost a dear friend and wonderful volunteer, Grady Barnwell. We miss his humor, his smile, and his dedication to the museum. And we are better for having known him.

Last time I asked you all for a special favor—to help us find the funds to bid on a number of items through an online auction. I want to offer a great big thank you to those who came to our aid through donations for this specific need. We were not, however, the high bidder on the Capt. Winslow items. Your donations have been placed in a separate account so that next time we find something up for auction, we'll have a financial base from which to work. We will definitely let you know when that happens. Unique Civil War naval artifacts with national impact do become available at auction houses on occasion, and we have to be ready to move quickly.

Thank you all for your memberships, your donations, your time, and your continued dedication to the National Civil War Naval Museum and to the projects we have underway here.

Come see us soon,

Holly B. Wait

Our "cool" board member,
Sam Ruffner, with the River
City Horns, playing in
Uptown Columbus.



In Memory Of Grady Barnwell



The staff, board members, and volunteers at the National Civil War Naval Museum wish to acknowledge the passing of Grady Glenn Barnwell, Jr. this summer. He and his wife, Judy, were longtime museum members and donors. Grady was also a passionate volunteer, and good friend to all of us.

Grady graduated from Columbus High in 1958 and the Medical College of Georgia in 1967. Afterwards he had a long career in the US Navy as a physician, retiring in 1993.

From their home in Pine Mountain, Grady made frequent trips to the museum as a member of the volunteer crew. Active since 2017, he regularly attended volunteer meetings and could often be found leading tours or greeting guests. He had a real passion for model making; completing repair work on the Monitor model and making models of the CSS Jackson and Picket Boat Number One, both currently on display. Grady was featured in a number of our YouTube videos and even did a little acting for one of our commercials.

Grady Barnwell is dearly missed, but for those who knew him, his memory will always bring a smile. Your donations in honor of Grady are much appreciated.

The Evolution of US Navy Uniforms During the Civil War

The uniforms of the modern United States Navy have remained essentially unchanged since the end of the Second World War, with only slight modifications being made to modernize pre-existing attributes. This regularity is an aspect of the Navy which was not to be found in the early days of its foundations through well into the nineteenth century. It would not be until the Civil War forced the underdeveloped Navy to expand and modernize that real attention would be paid to creating standardized dress and rank signifiers.

Unlike the Militia, the United States Navy was an institution which had not been intended to exist during peacetime. It would not be until American commerce was molested in the Mediterranean during the late 1780s that the need for a standing navy was recognized. The first uniform broad regulations were made in 1797, shortly before French interference with American trade caused a brief war in which the Navy proved its importance. These first uniforms were largely only for commissioned officers, and were vague in their descriptions. The next war with Britain in 1812 further demonstrated the importance of the Navy, and the necessary expansion finally led to the first regulation which included both commissioned and warrant officers in 1813, but not enlisted sailors, who generally wore whatever was deemed appropriate for the voyage. Enlisted sailors would not receive uniform regulations until 1841. By the 1850s navies all around the world were developing rapidly, and new steam driven vessels not only affected the technical operations of the Navy, but also its system of rank identification.

Ever since the Navy acknowledged the existence of "combatant" and "noncombatant" officers in 1794, it became necessary to design uniforms which would make distinguishing between the two simple. These

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US Navy Uniforms

terms were quickly changed to "line" and "staff" officers of which surgeons, pursers, chaplains, secretaries, and later engineers made up the latter. The confusion around what rank was attributed to these positions spilled over into their dress. The answer was unclear until the uniform regulation of 1852 provided a lithographic print showing shoulder straps, cap devices, and sleeve stripes; yet another step towards standardization. The outbreak of the Civil War nine years later necessitated another overhaul of the uniform. In 1861, the perceived importance of engineers resulted in new cap and shoulder devices, and as the Navy expanded rapidly, new uniform regulations for all personnel would be instituted on July 16, 1862. New ranks such as Admiral, Lieutenant-Commander, and Ensign were added, further demanding attention to the uniform. The new dress of 1862 reflected the nonfrivolous position the Navy found itself in during the early years of the war, with sword knots and much of the gold lace removed from all uniforms. This trend of simplification would follow for the uniform modifications of 1863, and the order of 1864, with each new iteration becoming more simple.

As the Navy's high command was more concerned with fighting a war than policing uniform violations, many officers and crew wore mismatched uniforms of various regulations. As the war came to an end the Navy began to downsize, decreasing its strength from around 700 ships in 1865 to around 50 vessels by 1880. This meant a significant reduction in manpower, which resulted in yet another alteration in the uniform in 1866. While this change brought back much of the gold lace of the peacetime service, it also made sure to retain the rank and corps symbols which had been found to be effective during the war.

The lessons learned from the war had resulted in a system of rank indication and symbols for corps which remain to this day. It would not be until the early twentieth century that the dress of the Navy could be truly called uniform. The Civil War had begun a chain reaction of effective and streamlined revisions within the service resulting in the modern system of rank or corps identification today.

The article on US Navy Uniforms was researched and written by Ian Poole, former museum intern & summertime assistant for four years in a row; now our "Employee Afloat" in Alaska.

When you next visit the museum, please take a look at the exhibit Ian put together for us about Navy insignia.



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Mystery at the Museum

Each night will feature a signature dessert provided by **KimmyCakes**, a local online bakery that specializes in delicious cheesecakes, cookies, breads, muffins, and more. Each ticket holder will also have access to the dessert bar. That sweet buffet will be stocked with chocolate confections, cookies, cupcakes, and other sugary delights for guests to enjoy.

Please see below to see what signature dessert will be featured nightly:

October 19th- Key Lime Cake

October 20th- Banana Pudding Cheesecake

October 21st- Blue Velvet Oreo Cheesecake

October 27th- Strawberries & Champagne Cake

October 28th- Red Velvet Butter Pecan Cheesecake

A U.S. Naval Engineer in a Savannah Cemetery

By Logan Barrett, Historian



On January 15, 1865, United States naval engineer George S. Paul wrote a macabre letter to his parents while aboard the USS *Sonoma* in the Savannah River. Just weeks after William Tecumseh Sherman presented the capture of Georgia's coastal city as a "Christmas gift" for Abraham Lincoln, crews of United States navy blockade ships such as the *Sonoma* found themselves doubling as additional occupational forces while on shore leave in the city. For United States sailors such as Paul, exploration of Southern port cities such as Savannah was typically met with curiosity and excitement in comparing the culture of these cities to those they knew from home.

In his letter to parents Hosea and Ellen Paul, he first described the occupation of Savannah, noting he was impressed with the discipline and conduct of Sherman's army. He also mentioned to his parents the beautiful women he made the acquaintance of while assuring them these women came from respectful families. Indicative of an engineer's mind, Paul further describes Savannah's built environment in writing "it is a place that has been built very well from mechanics and the houses are mostly a better class than in a northern city of its size."

His letter then takes an interesting turn. Paul spends a significant portion of the letter detailing a troubling experience he had in a cemetery. He writes, "I went into a graveyard which is in the city and in looking around I saw a tomb opened and went and looked into it and saw what was left of Gen. McIntosh after some thirty years entombed." Describing the grim sight, he continued, "The coffin was most all gone and a good many of his bones now scattered around but his hair and skull bones were in position." The detail of this passage of his letter home suggests the impact this experience had on Paul.

The cemetery Paul describes is the Colonial Park Cemetery located in historic downtown Savannah. The cemetery originally began in 1750 and was closed to burials by 1853. During the early occupation of the city, Colonial Park Cemetery served as a camp site for hundreds of United States soldiers. The disturbed grave Paul viewed was that of Lachlan McIntosh, a political leader for the American independence movement in Georgia and a brigadier general in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. McIntosh defended Savannah during siege by British forces during the war. McIntosh also killed Button Gwinnet, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, in a duel caused by a political dispute in 1777. Ironically, Gwinnett's remains are also buried in Colonial Park Cemetery.

Paul's observations on the disturbed remains of McIntosh allow us to explore themes of the Civil War experience. This story depicts a sailor describing a scene of death to his parents. Historians such as Drew Gilpin Faust have explained the Civil War as a watershed of trauma in a nation reeling from death on unprecedented numbers. We can imagine a way in which Paul writing to his parents about the macabre scene safely removed from the present carnage allowed him a way of expressing, intentionally or unintentionally, the psychological impact of war. A description of a disturbed grave replaces images of ongoing horror while also revealing morbid interest in death.

The ruination of a gravesite of a leader in the American Revolutionary War serves as a metaphor for the experience of the Civil War in which the United

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US Naval Engineer in Savannah

States was literally and symbolically in ruins not many generations removed from the nation's founding era. Seeing the grave of a hero of the country's recent past forgotten and damaged would potentially have an unsettling impact on a sailor told his sacrifices were important for the survival of the country. The destruction of the United States's built environment, including sites of memorialization for the founding generation, added to the war's trauma and the nation's uncertain future.



Grave of Lachlan McIntosh today, in Savannah

Bone Saws, Forceps, and Knives . . .Oh My!

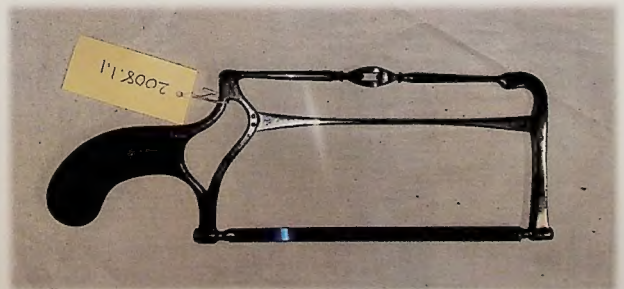
By Natasha Beining, Collections Manager

Hey y'all! I am the new collections manager and I am very excited to be working at the National Civil War Naval Museum. Currently, I am a student at Chattahoochee Valley Community College. Over the past four years, I have worked at several museums in Georgia and Virginia. I volunteered with the archaeology department at Mount Vernon for about three years then worked at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. After my family moved to Columbus I worked at Historic Westville for some time.

Enough about me, though. Let's talk about work. As collections manager, I am putting my eyes on every artifact in our collection, making sure that accession numbers are correct, online information is entered, and that paperwork backs everything up. I am also putting together a new exhibit (see title above), and trying to find ways to connect with future visitors and with younger visitors. For example, I recently made a TikTok account(@portcolumbusncwnm) and started creating humorous, educational videos. And since it's almost Halloween, the first TikTok video was about a Civil War surgeon's bone saw — by far one of the creepiest artifacts in the collection — at least in my opinion!

We do not have a lot of background information on this particular artifact; it was donated before the museum reopened at 1002 Victory Drive. Our former historian, Jeff Seymour, believed that the blade was much newer than the rest of the piece (it is VERY sharp). The saw is 33 cm in length, 12 cm in width, and weighs 365 grams. Bone saws were some of the most vital medical instruments used during the Civil War because of the number of amputations performed. Contrary to popular belief, around ¾ of the 60,000 or so patients in the Civil War who had a limb amputated actually survived.

Visit the museum soon to see this artifact, a surgeon's medical bag and instruments, plus a dental kit. Hope to see y'all soon!



The CREW

NEW and **RENEWING** Members
... from July 1 through October 31, 2023

Thank you for your support!

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Commodore

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** new members*

Christmas at the Museum!

Ho Ho Ho!

Join us for our
annual holiday
open house.

Saturday Dec. 2
10-4:30

Sunday Dec. 3
12:30-4:30

There'll be
music,
entertainment,
kids crafts, tours,
decorations,
Santa's Shop,
and perhaps
a surprise guest
or two!

**Many thanks to those
who donated to our
"collections" fund.**

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the past, giving them a better sense of
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